

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 001364

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/23/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KISL](#) [KPAL](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: EAST BANKER VIEWS ON HAMAS

REF: A. AMMAN 1177

[1](#)B. AMMAN 1175

Classified By: Ambassador David Hale for Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

[1](#)1. (S) Summary: Three political thinkers from Jordan's East Bank establishment shared with us their views) ranging from alarmist to confident) on the " Hamas effect " and Jordan's internal politics. In a separate meeting, the chief of Jordan's security service expressed confidence that the GOJ could contain and manage any near-term bounce in radicals, strength in Jordan. All agreed, however, that Hamas' victory has boosted the self confidence of the more radical elements of Jordan's legal Islamist movement, and that we should expect a season of more assertive Islamist rhetoric, that, while not threatening the GOJ, would add to the pressure on it. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Three East Bank analysts debated the implications for Jordan of the Hamas victory over lunch at the Ambassador's residence February 21. Musa Keilani, editor of the daily newspaper "Al Urdun," a former Ambassador to Bahrain, and a respected observer of the Islamist political scene was the most alarmed of the three. Keilani only half-jokingly said he wished Palestinian security forces loyal to Fatah had "aborted" the recent elections before the results had been announced. He warned that Hamas' victory in the Palestinian areas would strengthen admirers of Hamas) especially West Banker radicals within Jordan's Muslim Brotherhood) and that these forces "no longer had the respect" for the Hashemites that an earlier generation of Islamists did. Keilani contested the view, prevalent within the GoJ, that the GoJ wins whether Hamas holds to its militant principles and suffers isolation as a result; or compromises and accepts the two-state formula. Keilani made little effort to distinguish between actual members of Palestine's Hamas and of Jordan's Muslim Brotherhood/Islamic Action Front, even though the Jordanian organizations have a record of non-violence (ref A). Any strengthening of political Islamists in Jordan, he said, had the potential to snowball into a threat to the regime. (Note: Musa Keilani's brother Ibrahim Keilani is a respected figure in the Muslim Brotherhood's traditional East Bank establishment; another brother, the late Muhammad Rasoul Keilani, was a director of Jordan's senior security service. End note.)

[1](#)3. (C) Muhammad Sawalha, a former Secretary General of Jordan's parliament and currently President of the Jordanian Association of Political Scientists, countered that whatever the fate of the Hamas government across the river, Jordan's Islamists and Palestinians did not have an interest in radically altering their current posture toward the GOJ. Meanwhile, Jordan's East Bank establishment) in government, society, and within the Muslim Brotherhood itself) would resist radicalization. Sawalha thought it likely that regime-friendly moderates within the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood would prevail in the caucuses that the movement is currently conducting. (Note: In a development that seemed to support Sawalha's analysis, on February 21 local media reported that a leading radical, Humam Sa'id had been defeated in an attempt to win re-election to the Brotherhood's Shura Council. However, Sa'id will have a second opportunity to win a seat later this month. End note.) He argued, however, that it was in the long-term interest of the East Bankers and of the Jordanian regime to do more to integrate Palestinian Jordanians into Jordan's society and power structure. He thought the GOJ would feel more pressure from the Islamist movement to meet publicly with Hamas representatives once a Palestinian government was in place.

[1](#)4. (C) Kamil Abu Jaber, Foreign Minister from 1991 to 1993 and currently head of Jordan's diplomatic training institute, agreed with Sawalha that radicals would find it hard to translate the Hamas victory on the West Bank into any dramatic advances here on the East Bank. He argued that Jordan needed to make more progress toward integrating Palestinian-Jordanians. He agreed that the recent public statements of some Muslim Brotherhood leaders -- about the movement's readiness to re-enter or even "lead" the government, and in support of Hamas -- were more assertive than Jordanians were accustomed to; he expected to hear more of this in coming months.

[1](#)5. (SBU) All three analysts agreed that the " Hamas effect ", whatever its strength, will complicate the already difficult

challenges facing the Bakhit cabinet in 2006: security; the cut in fuel subsidies scheduled for March; other efforts to address the GOJ's fiscal gap; and proposals to liberalize political life and the media.

GID Chief on Hamas and Jordan's Islamic Movement

16. (S) The chief of Jordan's General Intelligence Directorate, Muhammad Dhahabi, struck a confident note with Ambassador in a February 19 conversation about Hamas. He said the GID had good visibility into the caucuses now under way within Jordan's Muslim Brotherhood and its political wing, the Islamic Action Front (ref A). The GID would be using its influence to support the movement's current East Bank leadership, in order to ensure that more radical (and largely Palestinian-Jordanian) tendencies in the movement do not take control.
HALE